

DOE High Performance (R-5) Windows and Low-E Storm Windows Volume Purchase  
Questions (Q) and Answers (A) from Interested Parties

The following example was created to describe what is anticipated to be the process of buying windows through the program website:

**EXAMPLE**

1. A potential purchaser goes to the website and chooses the appropriate bin category for the desired window(s). Each bin will contain a range of prices which are slightly higher and lower than the highest and lowest prices in the group. E.g. If the highest bid price in that particular bin is \$275 and the lowest is \$200, the range of prices might read \$185-\$285. The buyer will not yet have any information about the prices offered by the individual vendors in that bin.
2. Clicking on any bin will provide a list of the vendors who offer that product with URLs, e.g. Vendor 1, Vendor 2, Vendor 3, Vendor 4, etc. Clicking on a vendor URL will lead to a website maintained by that vendor. Purchasers will need to return to the vendor list page to follow the link of another vendor.
3. From here, the purchaser may be directed in whatever way the vendor chooses. E.g. the purchaser could be asked to enter information such as zip code, total number of windows being sought, etc. It is the responsibility of the vendor to direct the purchaser to a point of sales contact AND to successfully record any sales which result from that purchaser.

**The Program**

1. Q. Is the program still open?  
***A. Phase I of the program is open until the closing date of the solicitation which will likely be in mid-February 2010.***
2. Q. Will there be RFP winners or will all products meeting the minimum specifications be included in the program? Will it be based upon each individual product/price/quantity, or will there be a maximum price that all bidders under that number are qualified for the program?  
***A. Winners may have been a poor choice of words. A better term is “qualified vendors” meaning that any vendor that meets the minimum specifications in the solicitation and for which an agreement can be put in place with PNNL will be listed on the website corresponding to the products bid into the program. There are no minimum or maximum bid prices in the specifications in the solicitation.***

3. Q. Will this program be negotiated with individual homeowners or with the local municipalities?
- A. As long as the buyer is purchasing windows in the specified minimum volume, there are no restrictions imposed by the program on who may buy. It will be left up to the vendors to ascertain if the buyer is 'qualified'.***
4. Q. What kind of marketing is the program doing?
- A. A considerable effort from the volume purchase team has been underway to educate a variety of groups on the benefits of R-5 and low-e storm windows and the future availability of these highly efficient products through this volume purchase. Whether through meetings, webinars, or conference calls, various potential buyers have learned more about this program, and are excited about the opportunity within it. These groups include academia, local government, homebuilders, contractors, non-profits, weatherization and others. The Volume Purchase Team has also worked with various publications and web sites to develop articles about the program as well as to provide cross-linkage across web sites for further exposure. You can find examples of organizations the program team has been working with, as well as letters from groups expressing interest in participating in this program at [www.R-5WindowsVolumePurchase.com](http://www.R-5WindowsVolumePurchase.com).***
5. Q. The ENERGY STAR program has continued to try and find balance in its program to identify the key elements to an efficient system in differing regions. It would be nice to assemble a matrix that will identify windows which will perform equally well, with regard to efficiency, in the more southern regions of the US.
- A. Currently the volume purchase program is limited to R-5 windows and low-e storm windows and has information related to the cost-effectiveness of these products. ENERGY STAR likewise has this information on their windows website and a purchaser may need to explore both websites in order to ascertain the best windows for their application and region of the country.***

#### **The Matrices and Hotlinks**

6. Q. We are concerned with publishing our prices in a public manner.
- A. As described in the example, actual product prices will not be posted on the volume purchase website. We are keenly aware of the sensitivity to this issue and are making arrangements to address that sensitivity. Several possibilities are being discussed (see the example at the beginning of this document), but potential purchasers will not be able to associate a listed price with a vendor until they contact that vendor directly.***

7. Q. What information and/or detail will be available via the hot link from each product bin?  
***A. The vendors will provide one hot link (URL) for each product posted on the volume purchase web site. Because the link is maintained by the vendor, any and all information contained in the link is at the discretion of the vendor.***

**Minimum Orders, Bidding, and Reporting Sales**

8. Q. What are the minimum orders which the vendors are expected to meet?  
***A. The minimum order stated in this program is 15 for retrofits and 20 for new windows. This total may be reached by any combination of different window types and sizes found on the website. Qualified purchasers may still request less than the number of windows. If they fail to meet the minimum, vendors have the discretion to refuse the order.***
9. Q. There were multiple comments about the volume purchase program allowing minimum orders of 5 or 10 windows. Does this constitute a volume sale?  
***A. The “volume” created in this program is intended to be derived from the aggregation of buyers organized and directed to the qualified vendors who participate, NOT NECESSARILY from the volume of a single purchase. Networks of distributors already create large volumes in this fashion. However, it is easier for many suppliers to estimate and create lower prices when considering bulk sales, therefore there will be a minimum order ‘guideline’ (around 15-20 windows) in the program.***
10. Q. How will PNNL report overall sales through the VPP program back to the stakeholders?  
***A. DOE will provide a sales report to each vendor on a yet-to-be-determined basis that reflects the sales reported by that vendor. Sales data by UI or sliding glass doors will not be shared with other vendors. DOE however anticipates posting summary (total) sales data by product (total R-5 windows/sliding glass doors and total low-e storm windows) on a periodic basis on the volume purchase website.***
11. Q. What is the “base” price? How is it affected by minimum orders?  
***A. The “base” price is the price of the window or low-e storm window that meets the minimum specifications in the solicitation (including minimum quantity) without any delivery costs, handling costs or sales taxes. These are the prices which must be bid into the program for every product. A vendor is always allowed to sell lower than the ‘base’ bid price but not higher. A vendor can also sell fewer windows/low-e storm windows than the minimum order quantity in the specifications; however, the ‘base’ price in this scenario still cannot exceed the original ‘base’ bid price.***

12. Q. Must bid sheets be submitted by a certain deadline? May products be added during the 12-month period?

**A. A successful bid for at least one product must be submitted before the bidding deadline to become a “qualified vendor”. Only these qualified vendors will be able to add products later in the program, provided these products qualify under the minimum specifications in the solicitation. A process will be put in place for vendors to add such products.**

13. Q. How do the vendors know that the buyers are coming through the program and not somewhere else?

**A. A vendor is free to choose the best method for tracking buyers. Because all traffic from the program comes via the URL the vendors provide for the volume purchase website, it is suggested that this is the most reliable means to track sales coming from the program. In any event, the responsibility to track and report all sales accurately lies with the vendors.**

14. Q. There was a comment about custom-designed replacement windows being measured by ¼ -inch increments. This could lead to over 30,000 possible combinations. How does a company submit that many bids?

**A. If a vendor currently has prices listed in UI bin categories rather than listed individually for each product, just provide the prices for the UI bins and we will list them accordingly as noted above.**

15. Q. Would it be possible to bid products according to tiered pricing? For example;

50-100 - \$x  
100-200 - \$y  
200+ - \$z

**A. The only price that will be required in the program is that which is bid on the minimum orders. If vendors would like to sell larger volumes at prices lower than the bid prices, they are certainly encouraged doing so. This may be something the vendor could announce on their web page once the potential purchaser links to that page, but will not be advertised nor noted on the volume purchase web site.**

16. Q. How does DOE intend to deal with bid packages submitted by manufacturers that only sell products through authorized representatives?

**A. The qualified vendors will be responsible for providing the point of sale (contact information) for the bid products at the prices bid. The point of sale may be through a distributor and/or directly from the manufacturer.**

17. Q. Will it be possible to raise prices at some point?

***A. Not for the duration of the original contract, expected to be ~12 months from the time of signing the agreement. Vendors however may lower prices at any time and a provision will be made for doing so.***

#### **Minimum Specifications and Warranties**

18. Q. Will there be any allowance for windows which come very close to meeting the specifications but are slightly short?

***A. All windows products must meet all of the minimum specifications in the solicitation such as U-factor, air leakage, etc.***

19. Q. Are fiberglass (frame) windows and doors allowed to participate also, or is it limited to vinyl, aluminum, and wood?

***A. There are no restrictions or limitations on the type of frames to be used to meet the minimum specifications in the solicitation.***

20. Q. How soon are we required to provide performance data on our product that meets these stringent ratings?

***A. Performance data and certification will be required for the products bid into the program before the products are made available for sale and purchase. Guidance will be provided to the vendors in the solicitation on the approximate timeline for providing this information. Any product bid into the program that does not meet the certification requirements at the time the products will be listed for sale, will not be allowed into the program until the certification is provided.***

21. Q. What is the minimum glass thickness, maximum glass size, kind of glass, i.e., annealed, tempered or, laminated?

***A. Storm windows will be required to have a minimum glass thickness of 3 mm. There are no requirements regarding glass size, type of glass, etc. Products that meet all minimum specifications in the solicitation will qualify.***

#### **Warranties, Standards and Certification**

22. Q. Are you requiring any specific thermal testing for the storm products, or do we assume that if the low e used meets the specification, the product will also?

***A. Storm windows will not have thermal testing, just the emissivity testing.***

23. Q. Does certification need to accompany a product before it is submitted, or can it come later?

***A. Products and the certifications accompanying those products do not have to be submitted at the time the bids are submitted and can be submitted at any time during the program. A vendor may submit an uncertified product to gain entrance to the program, but it will not appear on the volume purchase program website until certification can be verified.***

24. Q. For replacement windows and storm windows it states that the OWNER can elect for provider to repair, replace or refund.

***A. This was an error in our draft specifications. The R-5 warranty details give this power to the provider. The storm windows warranty will be revised in the specifications in the solicitation to give the power to provider.***

25. Q. Is it possible to replace the reference to ASTM D4099-95 with ANSI/AAMA 1002.10-93?

***A. The ANSI/AAMA 1002.10-93 is now used in the specifications.***

26. Q. Under certification requirements for R-5 windows we listed the '05 version of the NAFS standard on one side and the '08 version on the other side.

***A. The final specifications will require certification according to '05 or later version of the North American Fenestration Standard (NAFS), also known as AAMA/WDMA/CSA 101/I.S.2/A440.***

27. Q. Why is ASTM E-283 02 referenced?

***A. ASTM E-283 02 is already used in the NAFS standards where applicable. This information is redundant and will be removed from the specifications in the solicitation.***

28. Q. The warranty statement: "Warranted against visible obstruction" is wholly inadequate due to its vagueness. Can this be changed to compliance with ASTM C1036?

***A. Many of the terms which appear in warranties are not specifically defined (e.g. defects). Because the power to amend complaints lies with the provider, it is not always necessary to complicate the specifications with further compliance requirements.***

29. Q. What documentation is needed for certification?

***A. All testing listed in the specifications will require documentation. Many programs, such as NFRC, offer certification. If it is not offered, written proof of compliance must be provided from an independent third party tester for all products bid into the program.***

30. Q. There were several comments regarding the length of warranties (20 years on glass, 10 on non-glass parts).

***A. A warranty of 20 years on glass, 10 on non-glass components is available from several window manufacturers and thus the inclusion of this warranty in the draft specifications and will likely remain such in the specifications in the solicitation. However, we have decided to revise the low-e storm windows to a 10 year warranty on all parts including glass in the specifications in the solicitation.***

31. Q. The warranty statement: "Warranted against visible obstruction" is wholly inadequate due to its vagueness. Can this be changed to compliance with ASTM C1036?

***A. Many of the terms which appear in warranties are not specifically defined (e.g. defects). Because the power to amend complaints lies with the provider, it is not always necessary to complicate the specifications with further compliance requirements.***

32. Q. Why is there no minimum Design Pressure rating? All manufacturers selling NFRC rated products have this testing done and is a way to discern structural integrity.

***A. Design Pressure is covered in the NAFS (AAMA/WDMA/CSA 101/I.S.2/A440) standard currently required in the specifications.***

33. Q. Will field testing be done?

***A. No. Laboratory testing is all that's required.***

#### **Miscellaneous**

34. Q. As a manufacturer, are we required to work directly with the public or can we work with our existing network of window distributors?

***A. As noted above, qualified vendors will be responsible for providing the point of sale (URL and/or phone number) for the bid products at the bid prices. The point of sale may be through a distributor and/or directly from the manufacturer. A qualified vendor makes the decision for the point of entry for their URL and/or phone number.***

35. Q. The term "Low E Storm Window" is confusing. Can you explain the term so we understand why you are using it?

***A. See the volume purchase program website for an explanation of low-e storm windows that will be available through this program.***

**[www.R-5WindowsVolumePurchase.com](http://www.R-5WindowsVolumePurchase.com)**

36. Q. Has DOE considered a VPP website for low-E storm windows? We're concerned that potential purchasers may be misled into thinking that the Volume Purchase Program includes only R-5 windows, or that the [www.R-5WindowsVolumePurchase.com](http://www.R-5WindowsVolumePurchase.com) site only includes R-5 windows.

**A. The R-5 website is being modified with a new URL that is more 'generic', dropping the R-5 in the name. Once products are listed on the website, it will be clear to the potential purchasers that both R-5 windows and low-e storm windows will be available on the site. The current volume purchase web site URL will remain active and visitors to that URL will be automatically directed to the new web site.**

37. Q. There is no requirement for installation to be done by licensed installation contractors? The performance of all fenestration can be negatively impacted, and potentially negated, by improper installation.

**A. This issue (installation and quality of installation) is the same for any certified window. New windows will normally be covered under local codes, and buyers of retrofits will need to be aware of this issue themselves. The program will, however, try to bring this to the attention of potential buyers with information posted on the website.**

38. Q. What types of windows will be included other than those currently listed in the specifications, e.g. skylights, tilt and turn, double sliders, other sizes of patio doors, etc.

**A. We are unable to accommodate every type of window or sliding glass door variation on the market in the Phase I of the volume purchase program. We have carefully chosen those which are the most common and are most likely to sell in the minimum quantities specified in the solicitation. We may be able to accommodate other types of windows in Phase II of the volume purchase program anticipated to be launched in FY11.**

39. Q. Who is considered a "qualified purchaser"? What qualifications and processes will be applied to determine and let manufacturers know whether a given purchaser qualifies to use this program?

**A. DOE will not pre-screen purchasers and anyone accessing the volume purchase program website can potentially purchase products. It will be up to the vendors to determine if a purchaser is qualified to purchase products as long as the minimum quantities in the specifications in the solicitation are met or the vendor agrees to sell less than the minimum quantities to the potential purchaser at the base bid price.**



40. Q. Elaborate on reaching an agreement with a vendor?

***A. Qualified vendors (those meeting the minimum specifications in the solicitation and submit bids) will be asked to sign an agreement with PNNL that states that they agree to the conditions of the program (meet your bid price and report your sales). Beyond that, all sales agreements are between the vendor and the buyer.***

41. Q. Can the program add the caveat that buyers are responsible for making sure products meet their particular needs, e.g. higher structural integrity in hurricane areas?

***A. Yes. The website will try to make users aware of potential codes or other issues for which they are responsible.***

42. Q. As these funds are allocated, does it allow the homeowner to also claim the \$1500 ARRA rebate for 30/30 compliant product?

***A. Be aware that DOE is not allocating funds for purchasing windows as part of this program nor is this program connected to the federal rebate programs. However, customers who purchase qualifying windows through this program will be eligible for the \$1500 rebate as long as that rebate is in effect at the date of purchase.***